

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELIZE 00360 210546Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6283
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY GUATAMALA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 360

E/O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, UK, BH, GT, US
SUBJECT: GOVERNOR MCENTEE REVIEWS "THE PROBLEM"

1) TUESDAY, APRIL 11, I PAID COURTESY CALL ON GOVERNOR AND
CINC PETER MCENTEE IN BELMOPAN. AFTER EXTENDED AMENITIES
HE MOVED TO "THE PROBLEM." FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY HIS REMARKS.
MEMCON WILL BE POUCHED.

2) HE BELIEVES PREMIER PRICE IS "DESPERATE MAN" WHO WILL
TRY ANYTHING TO BRING ABOUT RAPID SOLUTION TO DISPUTE. HE
FEELS PRICE IS LOOSING STRENGTH IN COUNTRY AND IS STILL
SHAKEN BY LOSSES IN DECEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. GOVERNOR
SAID HE GETS IMPRESSION NEW GUATAMALAN LEADERS ARE PREPARED TO CON-
TINUE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED BY LAUGERUD, OR, MORE PRECISELY,
PREPARED LET LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION CONTINUE AND EVEN REACH
SETTLEMENT. THIS GOVERNOR FEELS, WOULD LET NEW
ADMINISTRATION HAVE SCAPEGOAT IF THINGS GO WRONG. HE TOLD ME
THERE GOOD CHANCE CONVERSATIONS WOULD START AGAIN AT ONE OF FIVE
POSSIBLE SITES. MCENTEE "BAD-MOUTHED" IDEA OF SO-CALLED
MULTI-LATERAL FORCE, SAYING IT HAS NO SUPPORT AMONG CARRIBBEAN
NATIONS. HE WONDERED IF USG PREPARED GIVE ANY FORM OF
GUARANTEES, PARTICULARLY IN CONCERT WITH CANADIANS AND
MEXICANS. I SAID I DID NOT SEE A MAJOR ROLE FOR US ALONG
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PAGE 02 BELIZE 00360 210546Z

SUCH LINES. MCENTEE SAID HE RATHER SUPPOSED NOT. MCENTEE
ALSO SUGGESTED THERE CONTINUES EXIST POSSIBILITY THAT SETTLE-
MENT INVOLVING NO BORDER CHANGES MIGHT BE POSSIBLE BUT
INSTEAD AN ECONOMIC PACKAGE MIGHT BE WORKED UP, WITH SOME
US PARTICIPATION. I FELT THERE MIGHT BE BETTER CHANCE
FOR THIS BUT THAT ANY DEFINITIVE OPINION WOULD HAVE TO COME
FROM DEPARTMENT.

3) MCENTEE MENTIONED SIZE OF UK FORCES HERE AT 2,000 PLUS AND STRESSED "SOPHISTICATION" OF BRITISH OPERATIONS IN BELIZE. THIS IS RATHER LARGER FORCE THAN I HAD THOUGHT. AM UNAWARE OF "SOPHISTICATED" NATURE OF UK FORCES.

4) MATTER OF ALLEGED CUBAN ACTIVITY HERE TREATED SEPTEL.

5) WHILE MCENTEE SPOKE OF PRICE'S "DESPERATION," ONE COULD NOT HELP BUT NOTE TONE OF FRUSTRATION, IRRITATION AND PERHAPS EVEN DESPERATION IN GOVERNOR'S VOICE AS WELL. EARLY IN CONVERSATION, HE REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO FACT BELIZE IS AN ANACHRONISM AND EMBARRASSMENT TO UK. NO DOUBT ONE COULD GET A BIT EDGY IN BELMOPAN, ESPECIALLY WITH THE MUMPS FROM WHICH HE IS JUST RECOVERING, NEVERTHELESS, MY IMPRESSION WAS OF A FRUSTRATED MAN.

6) WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BIO DATA ON MCENTEE WHICH CAN BE SUPPLIED. HE STRIKES ME AS A BIT HEAVY ON PROTOCOLARY MATTERS BUT SHARP, STRONG-MINDED AND ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH A GOOD RELATIONSHIP ON HIS TERMS.

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NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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